

My name is Bruce Topham and I thank the committee for allowing me to testify today. My family bought our cattle ranch in the Sprague River valley in 1972. We have resided there ever since, developing a rare herd of beef cattle that produce both breeding stock and grass fed meat. Our livestock are marketed from Mexico to Canada and as far east as Illinois and Missouri. In 1964, I graduated from Cal State University, Fresno magna cum laude with a degree in geology. This education fit well with our family ranching business as it trained me in ground water geology, a field I have practiced for 50 years now.

Upon moving to the ranch 42 years ago, I was impressed with the abundance of water. Artesian wells and springs were found throughout the area. My interest was such that I quickly assembled all the well logs and geological reports in our valley. I showed up at most drilling sites and became acquainted with the drillers in the area. I became quite knowledgeable on the geologic structure and ground water characteristics of our valley. Soon I was in demand for locating well sites, renovating old wells, conducting field studies and writing geological reports on ground water matters in the area. All I have seen and all I have learned flies in the face of OWRD's current computer model on the subject.

A case in point: I was commissioned to research and report on a local irrigation well that when started, dried up a spring in 20 minutes. These two were more than a mile apart. At the same time another well situated 400 feet from the production well was unaffected all summer long. This is a very clear example of the complexity of the geology in our valley. Porosities are quite variable, ground water can be compartmentalized, aquifers and confining strata are often faulted and of limited extent. Ground water conditions are localized and quite variable. One local well is 1,700 feet deep and produces 30 gallons a minute of 53 degree water. Less than 1/2 mile away another well has artesian flow of 300 gallons a minute at 70 degrees from an 1,100 foot depth. There are no springs warmer than 54 degrees in the area, yet this well is scheduled to be shut off for interference problems.

While on this subject, what is so sacred about a 1 mile limit on interference? I have documented ground water-surface water interference over distances greater than 2 miles, and I have seen pumped aquifers underlying surface water bodies totally impervious to each other.

My point is the science and field observations do not support the OWRD computer model or their theories. They have no solid scientific basis for their capricious and arrogant behavior in shutting off perfectly sound irrigation wells.

This is an example of an out of control bureaucracy on a power trip. The damage they can inflict on our valley, as devastating as it is, is nothing compared to the havoc that will be wrought throughout Oregon when they apply the same tactics to the rest of the state.

Thank you.